

MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
July 1, 2021

The Meeting of the City of Woodstock Environmental Commission was called to order by Chair Erica Poremba at 5:30 PM on Thursday, July 1, 2021.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION MEMBERS ATTENDING: Laurie Kacmar, Ed Ellinghausen, Steve Wenzel and Chair Erica Poremba.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Margaret Schneemann.

STAFF ATTENDING: Public Works Department Director Christina Betz and Executive Assistant/Chief Deputy City Clerk Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT: None.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Motion by S. Wenzel to accept the Minutes from the May 6, 2021 meeting, second by L. Kacmar. Ayes: L. Kacmar, E. Ellinghausen, S. Wenzel and Chair E. Poremba. Nays: None. Absentees: M. Schneemann. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Minutes accepted.

4. FLOOR DISCUSSION

- a. Public Comment: None.
- b. Commission Comment: None.

5. TRANSMITTALS (no discussion or action requested)

6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Speaker: Guy Spinelli – Paper Straw Producer/Manufacturer in Woodstock
Mr. Spinelli, owner of Guy's e-Paper, lives in Woodstock. About four years ago he started his research to find the best products to make paper straws. He stated that 500,000 plastic straws are used daily in the USA, and it takes approximately 200 years in a landfill for plastic straws to dissolve. Mr. Spinelli said paper straws have a bad image because they taste bad and they don't last long. He explained the materials and process that go into making his BOSS Straws. He mentioned that, in addition to the specific paper used, the curing process is also what helps the BOSS Straws last so long; up to 24 hours.

Mr. Spinelli is now in the process of educating the public about his straw product. He said that as of July 1st, all of Europe is not allowed to use plastic straws. He added that the BOSS straw, when put in a landfill, will be gone in 6 months as it is biodegradable and made from 100% recyclable paper. Mr. Spinelli's company makes 100,000 BOSS straws per day at his Woodstock location. Everything is made and purchased from US companies. Moving forward, Mr. Spinelli would like

to encourage municipalities to ban the use of plastic straws by food service businesses in their communities.

In response to a question from Chair Poremba, Mr. Spinelli said he sells to consumers and companies, alike. His company currently makes both 6mm and 8mm straws. He has been in the process of reaching out to companies and large restaurant chains to purchase and start using BOSS straws.

Chair Poremba mentioned that this Commission would like to recommend to City Council to ban plastic straws being utilized by food service businesses in Woodstock. In response to Chair Poremba's question, G. Spinelli said he'd be happy to assist with this. E. Ellinghausen asked about the price of plastic straws vs. BOSS straws. Mr. Spinelli said the average plastic straw costs \$0.01, BOSS straws cost \$0.02. Further discussion ensued.

G. Spinelli invited the Commissioners, as well as the City Council, to tour his local facility. Commissioners welcomed the invite and thanked Mr. Spinelli for all the information.

b. Re-usable Bag Initiative

C. Betz stated that the Woodstock City Council approved the reinstatement of the single-use bag fee beginning August 1, 2021. She added that retailers and consumers have been advised. C. Betz asked Commissioners if they'd like the City to share any particular information to re-educate the community on the re-usable bag initiative. Chair Poremba said she would like information put on the City's website and Facebook pages. In response to Chair Poremba's questions, C. Betz informed Commissioners that while this initiative was a joint effort between the Environmental Commission, and the Cultural and Social Awareness Commission, it has now fully transitioned over to the Environmental Commission. C. Betz stated this was based on communication with HR Director Deb Schober who is the liaison for the Cultural and Social Awareness Commission. C. Betz said this is a good time to further educate the population, to motivate people to change behaviors. S. Wenzel asked if these fees are replenishing the Environmental Fund, which C. Betz will look into. Chair Poremba wants to know how much money had been in the Environmental Fund to begin with and what the balance is at this time. Chair Poremba asked if this Commission should take on the paper straw initiative on their own? Or, if they should partner with another Commission? C. Betz will find out how best to proceed.

d. Environmental Master Plan

S. Wenzel mentioned that he had a conversation with Transportation Commission Chairman Andrew Celentano and he shared information about Project Lead the Way. Chair Poremba was interested in learning more about this project. Commissioners were interested in having A. Celentano come in to speak to the Commission. C. Betz said she'll will arrange this.

c. Community Gardens – Existing Site Update

Chair Poremba asked for an update on the community gardens. C. Betz said the City has two plots available. C. Betz added that the City continued with the same rules this year, which limited the number of plots per family. Staff went back through the waiting list, then did another social media post. C. Betz added that the City hasn't received any additional requests and no one is currently on the waiting list. Chair Poremba said she prefers to have another garden on the north side of town vs. adding on to the current garden site. S. Wenzel asked if there would be available space at Merryman Fields Park, and if there is suitable land at that site. C. Betz said she'll look at the site.

C. Betz commented on the Little Red Park and asked if it's Banford Park. Chair Poremba said she'll drive out there to determine what park it is. Chair Poremba asked if there's been any complaints about the community garden. C. Betz said she got a voicemail about weeds and someone complained that the fence looked terrible. Further discussions ensued about advantages of adding a community garden on the north side of town.

E. Ellinghausen asked about the 1200-gallon tank that he borrowed from Bull Valley. C. Betz said the tank is still at Public Works.

E. Ellinghausen left the meeting at 6:29 PM

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Dark Sky Initiative
- b. Future Oak Plantings in City Parks

C. Betz said she'll be meeting with Lisa Haderlein, The Land Conservancy, to discuss and create a type of Master Plan.

- c. Ellinghausen Brine Study – Update (conducting phase 2 of study to be revisited in fall 2021)
- d. Community Gardens – Future Expansion/Partnerships with other Community Groups

8. ADJOURN: To a Regular Meeting Thursday, August 5, 2021

Motion by S. Wenzel, second L. Kacmar, to adjourn this regular meeting of the Environmental Commission. Ayes: L. Kacmar, S. Wenzel and Chair E. Poremba. Nays: None. Absentees: E. Ellinghausen and M. Schneemann. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie
Executive Assistant/Chief Deputy City Clerk